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November 5, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am surprised that in your letter which I received yesterday you should suggest that in giving your representative in New York a list of the weapons we considered offensive there was any desire on our part to complicate the situation. At the time of our agreement, constituted by my letter of October twenty-seventh and your reply of October twenty-eighth, the list of the weapons we considered offensive had already been made public by my proclamation establishing the quarantine on the shipment of offensive weapons to Cuba, as well as an amendment to the list by the Secretary of Defense as provided in the quarantine proclamation. Earlier, in my press conference on September thirteenth, I had made clear my general position on this problem. At that time for example, I stated that the United States would act "if Cuba should possess a capacity to carry out offensive action against the United States" and in the same statement I said that we could not accept to have Cuba "become an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union." It seems clear, therefore, what the United States considered to be "offensive weapons" or, as stated in my letter of October twenty-seventh, "weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use."

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<sup>there can be no doubt</sup>  
 I think ~~you could have had~~ no doubt that we always considered the items listed in my proclamation as "offensive weapons" and if this were not the case and if, for example, you should consider bomber aircraft as not covered by our agreement, the consequences would indeed be serious. <sup>^</sup> On the other hand, I recognize, for example, that the language in the proclamation "mechanical or electronic equipment to support the above items" is capable of wide interpretation and I have no desire to take advantage of this rather sweeping language to cause difficulties for you. I am, therefore, instructing my representatives in New York to discuss this problem with Mr. Kuznetsov to ascertain what particular difficulties may be involved in this or other items on the list and can assure you that within the limitations imposed by my very clear public statements as to what was involved in this issue and in our agreement to settle it, we will make every effort to reach a quick solution in order to enable our agreement to be carried to completion.

In order to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, although I doubt that there could be any, I wish to comment upon a further point in your letter. You state that I gave assurances "that no invasion of Cuba would be made, not only by the United

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States but by other countries of the Western Hemisphere either. " The position is, of course, as stated in my letter of October twenty-seventh, that under certain conditions we would agree "to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba and I am confident that other nations of the Western Hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise. " There is, of course, an implication here that the United States would use its influence with the other countries of this Hemisphere and this is indeed so. I must tell you, in all frankness, however, that these are sovereign countries and that their willingness to give similar assurances will depend upon the extent to which they consider that Cuba will in fact cease to be a threat to their security. This, of course, belongs to a later phase of the settlement of this problem and I agree with you that we should proceed promptly with the current measures upon which we are engaged.

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We might also be prepared to drop reference to the Komar-class motor torpedo boats but you should refer back before any final agreement on this. Perhaps compromise on the latter item might be to leave Komars already there if additional vessels of this type not furnished.

You could explain that at the time agreement was reached by the President's letter of October twenty-seventh and Khrushchev's reply of October twenty-eight, the list of what was considered offensive weapons had already been made public by President's proclamation and by the President's press conference of September thirteenth, as well as President's address on October twenty-second.

If you consider useful you could also state that we have not included any items on the list with a view to obtaining access to Soviet technology. The one item on which we must be absolutely clear is that the IL-28's must be eliminated and for the present at least that submarines would be considered offensive.

The general limitation so far as the rest of the list is concerned is imposed by the fact that the list in the proclamation has been made public. Within this limitation we would be prepared to remove any legitimate Soviet difficulties.

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